

President Josh Goodlock called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Rotarians and guests recited The Pledge of Allegiance.

Rotarians and guests recited The Four Way Test.

Chris Buckley gave our invocation.

Our greeter Sarah Gerstner introduced our visitors: Matt Copp, past City Manager Larry Schaffer, Dr. Dedrick Martin (KRESA), Elizabeth Robinson, and Gary Meyer.

Randy Orwig introduced our speaker, Mayor Patricia Randall to present the 2024 State of the City for Portage – A Natural Place to Move. She introduced our Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Jim Pearson, new city council member Nicole Miller, City Manager Pat MacInnes, and past city manager Larry Schaffer.

2023 accomplishments include:

- Portage Road from center to Romence – boulevard in front of Pfizer
- Haverhill Water Tower updates
- \$1 million COPS grant – 8 new officers added to bring to a new total of sixty-nine sworn personnel
- Purchased a new property for new, sustainable DPW and transportation utilities building
- Repaved Portage Creek Bicentennial Park trail from Celery Flats to Milham
- West Lake Drive-In overlook
- Bishops Bog floating docks
- Award winning Senior Center – Excellence in Construction from Michigan Association of Builders and Contractors and APQA Project of the Year for the whole state
- Portage Community Center has over 4,000 members and is 80 percent self-sustainable
- Dementia friendly community
- New public participation plan
- One of only three communities in Michigan to win the coveted Financial Triple Crown for budget, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, and Popular Annual Financial Report
- Finished last year with budget surplus

For 2024, the Portage City Council held special meetings in November and January to set priorities for 2024-25 with a focus on our new Farmer's Market location, housing strategies, waste hauling, business-friendly Portage, legal services, and build on 2023 progress.

Announcements

- New Paul Harris Fellow +6 to Jen Maynard
- Send your 2024 Rotary Hero for Rotary Club of Portage nominations to Josh by **March 22** (josh@skillquestntl.com or 517-605-1925)
- Board meeting this Friday morning, **March 22 @ 7:30 am**, Michelle's Restaurant.
- Jack Neal passed away – Funeral will be Saturday, **March 23**, at Centerpoint Church (2345 10th Street North, Kalamazoo, MI 49009). Visitation at 1 pm and service at 2 pm.
- Blood drive signup for Thursday, **April 18**
- Memorial Day parade for Monday, **May 27**
- Marathon volunteer signups for Sunday, **May 5**
- The Rotary is for Reading program, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Kalamazoo, has openings for reading volunteers. Look for an email from Jim Cupper to sign up. Two

Rotarians each visit a second-grade classroom in the Kalamazoo Public Schools during the school district's college awareness week.

- Please complete your survey that Randy Orwig emailed to each member ASAP.
- Daisey Dollars are here! \$20 each. Pick them up from AJ Srmek.
- Saturday, **April 20**, Earth Day volunteer opportunity for Kalamazoo River cleanup from 11 am – 2 pm. Several groups will be assisting to clean the river from Jackson to Douglass.
- Our next show is Jurassic World Live for our Miller Auditorium fundraiser. We must sell ten tickets to each show to make \$10 per ticket. Be sure to use the QR code on the flyer.
- Check your Rotary email to register for the 2024 District Conference at the Radisson in downtown Kalamazoo on **May 3-4**. All registrations include a free Rotary t-shirt. The deadline for registration is **April 19**. All District 6360 Rotarians are invited to attend.

Highlights include:

- o Interact conference on Friday morning
 - o Edison neighborhood urban garden fruit tree planting Friday afternoon
 - o Taco bar party and art hop presentation, art hop, and pub crawl Friday night
 - o Yoga on Saturday morning
 - o Mental health awareness walk on Saturday morning
 - o Lunch and sessions, including Rotaract, Youth services – community impact and membership growth, DEI education, and strategic doing on Saturday afternoon
 - o Dinner with Rotary Club Heroes and club awards on Saturday night
 - o Register today!
- Update on our service dog – he is ready and will join the Portage Community Center on **April 4**. His name is Rio. Stacy Hunter has said the dog is already helping – better attendance and more positive behaviors.



- Support the 2024 Salute to Veterans to help honor veterans and active-duty military. Sponsor a personalized light-pole banner with a photo of your veteran for \$200. The city will display

the banners from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Proceeds benefit veterans' services at the Portage Zhang Senior Center. Only twenty-five banners are available and will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline to claim your banner and submit a photo of your veteran is **April 26**. To reserve a banner, visit PortageMI.gov and go to the City Manager page to complete and submit the Portage Salute to Veterans Banner Program application.

Happy birthday to Nicole Miller. Happy membership anniversary to Jen Maynard and Matt Semelbauer.

Sargeant at arms Jim Pearson collected happy bucks from Bill Crown, Art Roberts, Larry Shaffer, Matt Semelbauer, Dick Hewitt, Mark Bielang, John Crandle, Randy Orwig, Roy Dangle, Pat MacInnes, Bill Kauffman, Nicole Miller, Jen Maynard, and Matt Copp. Members were fined for not answering Portage-related trivia questions, including Dick Hewitt, Matt Semelbauer, Bob Borsos (answered correctly), Art Roberts, and Jose Santamaria.

50/50 drawing: Paul Carlson won \$38!

Ace of spades drawing: Mark Bielang drew the ace of spades and won \$500.

Our next meeting is **March 27** features Dan Jaqua, sharing the strength of our region. Meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm by President Josh Goodlock.